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Post-Yugoslav Region between Democratisation and Europeanisation of Party Politics: Experiences from Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina

Damjan Lajh and Alenka Krašovec

Abstract: *The main aim of this article is to discuss the potential interlocking of democratization and Europeanization processes in party politics in Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the two “extremes” in former Yugoslavia. While Slovenia has already gained full membership of the EU and has experienced the Europeanization processes in various aspects of the political system and public policies, Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the status of “potential candidate state for EU accession”, is still facing deep challenges related to the processes of Europeanization. While Slovenia has already gone through the five steps of Europeanization processes, Bosnia-Herzegovina is still stuck at the first step. Although at the very first stage Bosnia-Herzegovina followed the Slovenian pattern of Europeanization of party politics that includes establishing incremental formal links between national political parties and European party federations, further Europeanization processes in Bosnia-Herzegovina above all demand a democratically consolidated party arena, that for political parties would not lead to pressure to adapt themselves in order to mobilize their voters along ethnic lines. All in all, the conducted analysis revealed the two investigated countries are very different for making direct comparisons; nonetheless there was a common Yugoslav tradition in the past. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a unique European state, due to its mixed ethnic structure and strong ethnic cleavages, and thus we cannot expect a Slovenian and consequently a Central and Eastern European pattern of Europeanization processes, in Bosnian party politics.*

Key words: *democratization; Europeanization; party politics; Slovenia; Bosnia-Herzegovina*

Introduction

Europeanization, as one of the “sexiest” terms in the field of political science in the last decade or two, is generally closely connected with terms such as “innovation”, “modernization” or “formation”, and is thus mostly used in different ways to describe a variety of phenomena and processes of change. Therefore it is not surprising that the investigation of Europeanization processes is also becoming ever more attractive in former Yugoslavia, which has certain peculiarities in terms of its history, and how the European Union (EU) views the former country. It is also facing particular issues in its relationship with the EU.

In all of the former Yugoslav republics, although under different conditions, the democratic transition started at the beginning of the 1990s, when all the republics adopted new constitutions and conducted their first democratic and free elections. With the exception of Slovenia, in all the other former republics the democratic transition was more or less heavily blocked at the beginning. There are plenty of reasons for this, above all (in)direct involvement in a war, strong ethnic cleavages, and socio-economic determinants. The Yugoslav state was very diverse in the past, and the region of former Yugoslavia remains so, both politically and socio-economically. As a result, Slovenia was the only one of the former Yugoslav republics to join the EU on 1 May 2004, and experience the Europeanization processes in different aspect of the political system and in public policy; whereas all the other former Yugoslav republics faced delays in democratic transition. They fought for democratic survival rather than confronting the challenges of becoming part of European integration processes. In general, this delay in the democratization processes consequently had a negative influence on the development of market economies (one of the conditions of full EU membership is that markets should be capable of survive the openness and competitiveness of the EU single market). Moreover, the other Yugoslav republics have also had to meet additional criteria in the process of EU accession. Above all, these criteria include cooperation with the International Court of Justice in The Hague, especially in the countries that were heavily and directly involved in the Civil War: Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.

One of the main preconditions of a functioning democratic political system is the existence of a party system, which articulates different interests and offers (political) choice in the government-opposition relationship. Accordingly, democratic political systems need political parties to re-establish the link between politicians and the electorate, and to ensure the government's political responsibility (Abromeit, 1998: 33-4). As such, political parties certainly have a crucial role in processes of modernization, i.e. the processes of democratization and Europeanization. On the one hand, political parties have been the key players in establishing new independent states, following the disintegration of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The parties had the position of key constitutional and institutional political engineers. On the other hand, a closer inspection shows us that party organizations take centre stage in the case of EU politics too (Hix, 1999: 168). The majority of politicians in the EU are party politicians, including those in the European Council, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. As the main actors in election campaigns, political parties are the key actors in domestic elections and in elections to the European Parliament, while as the main actors connecting governments to parliaments and parliaments to voters, they are central to the relations between the EU institutions and between the national and EU levels (ibid.).

In the light of these considerations, the main aim of the article is to discuss potential interlacement of democratization and Europeanization processes of party politics in

Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the two “extremes”¹ in former Yugoslavia. In last fifteen years both countries have been subjected to different modernization processes. While Slovenia has already obtained full membership in the EU and has experienced the Europeanization processes in various domains of political system and public policies, Bosnia-Herzegovina with the status of “potential candidate state for EU accession” is still up to challenges, related to processes of Europeanization. Due to large differences in many aspects of political, social and economic life, even taking into account the common Yugoslav state of the past, our main research thesis is that we cannot expect the Slovenian pattern of Europeanization processes in party politics to be applied equally in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina (at least not in a very short period).

The article is based on an analysis of formal documents, and interviews conducted with responsible persons in selected political parties in Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Slovenia interviews were conducted by the authors in the period from April to June 2004 in Ljubljana. Interviews were held with the secretaries for international cooperation or the general secretaries of the five analysed parties: New Slovenia; Liberal Democracy of Slovenia; the Slovenian Democratic Party; the United List of Social Democrats; and the Youth Party of Slovenia. In Bosnia-Herzegovina interviews were conducted by the authors in the period from September to November 2005 in Sarajevo. Interviews were held with senior officials or deputies of the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina of the five analysed parties: the Party of Democratic Action; the Croatian Democratic Community; the Serbian Democratic Party; the Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

This article is structured as follows: section two presents an outline of the research agenda for investigating Europeanization processes in the post-Yugoslav region. In section three Slovenian experiences with Europeanization processes in the field of party politics are elaborated. Section four discusses the potential development of Europeanization processes of party politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina and identifies the main obstacles to the accession of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the EU. Finally, section five synthesizes the main findings.

Research agenda for investigating Europeanization processes (of party politics) in the post-Yugoslav region

Until recently, within the framework of investigating the effects of Europeanization processes the role of political parties has largely been neglected. As a result, the EU has only recently begun to be acknowledged as an environment that has potentially

¹ Of all the former Yugoslav republics Slovenia has had the most favourable economic, social and politico-cultural circumstances, whereas Bosnia-Herzegovina, frequently called “Yugoslavia in miniature”, has had the least favourable of these conditions, and at the same time it has been adversely affected by its heavily mixed ethnic structure.

significant consequences for the functioning of national parties. According to Panebianco (1988: 207), different environments (for example, the EU) directly influence parties, which are in turn structured by institutional constraints. These environments can be conceived as arenas in which relations between parties and other organizations take place. They are like gambling tables at which a party plays and obtains, based on its performance, the resources it needs to function. In some arenas the party exchanges resources with other organizations. This exchange can be mutual, in favour of the party or in favour of the other organization, whereas in other arenas the party competes with other organizations for resources (*ibid.*). In respect of European integration, national political parties connect and cooperate with European party federations². However, social scientists have only recently started to conceive both party arenas (EU and national) as interdependent and as a network of “relevant” environments. They have thus only gradually started to follow Panebianco’s (1988: 207) observations on how resources obtained in one arena have been spent in another, and how success at one gambling table – the exchange of resources in favourable conditions – has been affecting the extent of a party’s success at other tables.

The literature bringing together European integration and national political parties can generally be divided into three categories. The first explores attempts to recreate party activity outside the national political system, i.e. a focus on party groups in the European Parliament and the development of transnational party federations or European parties. This literature dates from the end of the 1970s, when the first direct elections to the European Parliament were held. The second approach focuses on the European policy orientation of individual political parties³ (Ladrech, 2002: 390). Finally, the third approach explores the impact of Europeanization processes on party systems (Mair, 2000; Ladrech, 2002) and national political parties⁴ (Ladrech, 2002).

In relation to the organization theory of political parties, there are particularly interesting research challenges here involving questions about (the extent of) influences (if there are any at all) of the EU level on national parties. The organization theory “expects” parties to adjust their organization and activities to the changes seen in political and social environments. For example, Panebianco (1988) identified two different aspects of the organization-environment relation: the effects of pressures and environmental changes on an organization; and the importance of its hunting ground, i.e. the part of the environment targeted by the organization’s ideology, which the

² According to Niedermayer (1983), we can talk about three stages of interaction within European party federations and also between them and national parties: contact, cooperation and integration.

³ What is important is that in neither of these two approaches national parties are viewed as actors in European integration or the European policy process, nor as actors affected by this process, apart from instances when the EU has itself become politicized in elections (Ladrech 2002: 390).

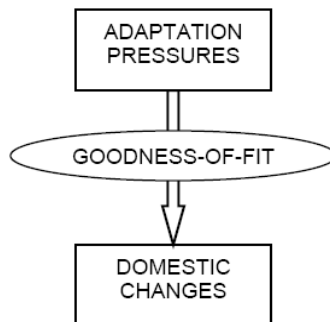
⁴ Five research dimensions concerning the possible impacts of Europeanization processes on national parties are important: changes in party programmes; internal organizational changes; changes in national party competition, changes in relations between the government and parties, and changes in relations between parties at the supranational level (i.e. outside the national party arena) (Ladrech 2002).

organization must control if it is to maintain its identity. According to Panebianco (1988: 204), the degree of adaptation to the environment depends on two factors:

- 1) environmental characteristics, since certain environments demand adaptation while others allow for manipulation; and
- 2) the level of institutionalization, since the more the institutionalization the less the party tends to passively adapt itself to the environment, and the more it is able to dominate it, and vice versa.

The degree of adaptation to the environment in the case of Europeanization processes depends on the “goodness-of-fit” between the European level arrangement and domestic structures: the lower the compatibility (fit) between the new requirements on the one hand, and national structures on the other hand, the higher the adaptational pressure (Risse – Cowles – Caporaso 2001: 6–7). Europeanization processes thus “require” that various national actors (for example political parties) take part in the internalization of the EU norms and the development of new identities. Satisfying these new requirements means changing actions, routines and even formal procedures (North, 1990), depending on the level of adaptational pressure. Due to different political arrangements in the EU, the result is a very diverse pattern of problem-solving approaches and styles of organization (Héritier, 1999) in EU member as well as accession states. Hence, this internalization (or adaptation) is not mechanical.

Figure 1: Adaptation pressures as a consequence of Europeanisation processes: narrow view



The “goodness-of-fit”, however, does not tell the full story of Europeanization. For example, in some cases governments are under little adaptational pressure from EU regulations, whereas in some others adaptational pressure may not be the best predictor of how a country responds to Europeanization: a country can be under strong adaptational pressure but can implement EU policy without too many problems (Radaelli, 2003: 44–6). In addition, while taking into account EU accession states or candidate states, adaptation pressures on different domains of political system vary dramatically with respect to the level of institutional relations with the EU. In this context, Lippert,

Umbach and Wessels (2001) talk about five steps of Europeanization in the accession states. In the pre-phase of Europeanization, the first contacts between applicant states and the EU are re-established. In the first phase of Europeanization the European or Accession Agreement is signed, and this represents the backbone of (future) institutional relations. The second phase of Europeanization embraces the pre-accession period, which brings to the first elementary (authors' note: this is usually incremental) institutional adaptations, especially towards efficient coordination of European affairs at the national level. The third phase of Europeanization includes the negotiation process, in which first either incremental or radical changes in individual policy fields occurs. Finally, the last phase of Europeanization embraces the period of full membership (ibid.: 985-1000).

Figure 2: Five steps of Europeanisation in EU accession/candidate/potential candidate state

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| first contacts between EU accession/candidate/potential/member states and the EU | signature of Europe Agreement | pre-accession period | negotiating process | full membership in the European union |
| pre-phase of Europeanisation processes | Europeanisation processes | | | |

Source: Adapted by Lippert et al. (2001).

In the case of pre-phase of Europeanization and first phase of Europeanization, Ágh (2003: 117) discusses “anticipatory Europeanization”, which in the case of Central and Eastern European post-socialist states applies in the first half of the 1990s and was combined with processes of democratization and modernization under the supervision of various international organizations (not only the EU, but also for example the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund), as “institutional mentors”. From the second phase of Europeanization, according to Lippert, Umbach and Wessels (2001), Ágh talks about “adaptive Europeanization”.

As we already mentioned, Europeanization processes are closely linked to the processes of modernization⁵. With respect to anticipatory Europeanization, and in accordance with Article 6 of the EU Treaty, principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law are the main preconditions of full EU membership. In this way, to become part of the EU⁶ the

⁵ Similarly, Hix and Goetz (2001: 21) for example argue that the processes of Europeanization interlock with the processes of democratization, liberalization and privatization in the post-socialist countries.

⁶ Article 49 of the EU Treaty states: “Any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members.

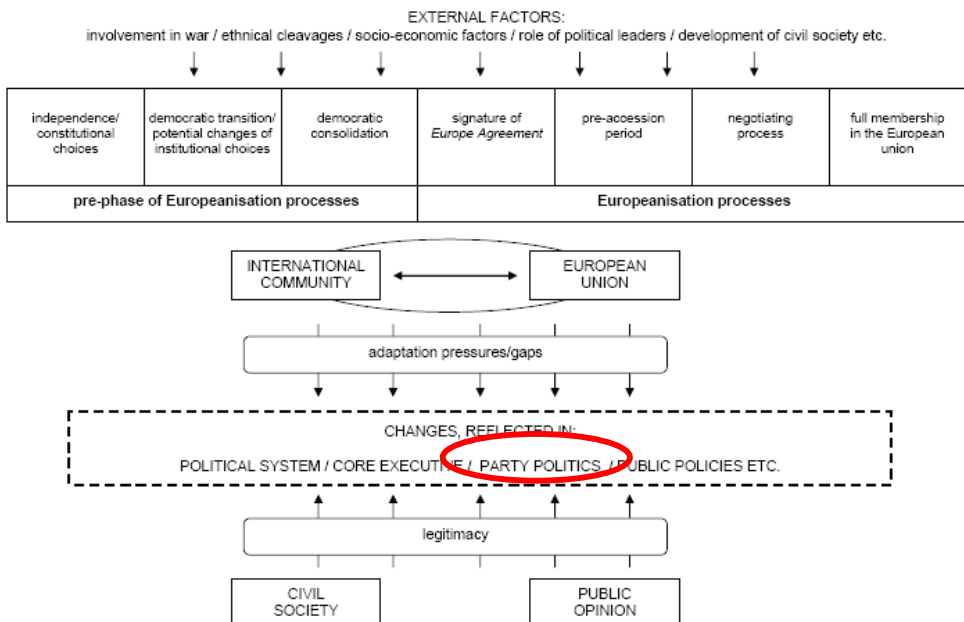
The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the Applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements.”

respective country has to fulfil the economic and political conditions known as the Copenhagen Criteria, according to which a candidate country should: a) be a stable democracy, respect human rights and the rule of law and protect minorities; b) have a working market economy; and c) adopt the common rules, standards and policies which make up the body of EU law (Jacobsen, 1997: 1).

Taking into consideration the post-Yugoslav region, only Slovenia followed the Central and Eastern European “natural” pattern and passed the test, according to Ágh, of both anticipatory and adaptational Europeanization. The other former Yugoslav republics only recently entered the phase of anticipatory Europeanization, while Croatia has started the adaptive Europeanization phase. However, at this point at least two additional important facts must be mentioned. Besides the aforementioned preconditions of not only full EU membership, but also for building up deeper institutional relations, practically all other former Yugoslav republics met additional criteria related to their accession to the EU. Among these criteria, cooperation with the International Court of Justice in The Hague is especially evident. Secondly, particularly in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the EU is not the only “institutional mentor”, as this role is still very much in the hands of the wider international community.

Following the above theoretical considerations, a research agenda for investigating Europeanization processes in the post-Yugoslav region is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Research agenda for investigating Europeanisation processes in post-Yugoslav region

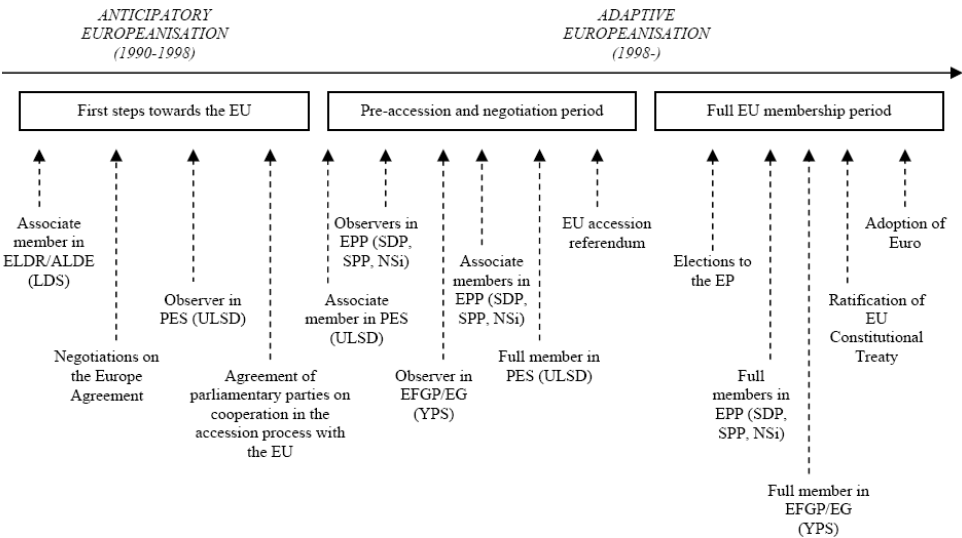


In the next section we will present the Slovenian experiences of Europeanization processes in the field of party politics.

Slovenian experiences with the Europeanization processes in the field of party politics

The Slovenian experiences with Europeanization processes are summarized in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Critical junctures of the EU impacts to party politics in Slovenia



Legend:

- EFGP/EG European Federation of Green Parties/European Greens
- ELDR/ALDE – European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party/Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
- EPP – European People’s Party
- LDS – Liberal Democracy of Slovenia
- NSi – New Slovenia
- PES – Party of European Socialists
- SDP – Slovenian Democratic Party
- SPP – Slovenian People’s Party
- ULSD – United List of Social Democrats
- YPS – Youth Party of Slovenia

Slovenia had its first “touch” of the EU even before its independence. In addition to the establishment of independent statehood in 1991, it has also been pursuing integration into the West, expressed through full membership of the EU. In fact, “Europeanization has become a kind of substitute for the old ideology” (Fink-Hafner – Lajh, 2003), with EU membership becoming a strategic goal of Slovenian foreign policy even before its formal independence. In accordance with the Basis of Slovenian Foreign Policy, adopted in March 1991, EU membership was declared “an important step forward in the creation of a democratic, stable, strong, economically successful and well-organized country”. Moreover, the reformed former Slovenian League of Communists had adapted to civil society’s demands at the end of the 1980s to such a great extent that it chose the slogan “Europe Now!” for its party manifesto, prepared for the first free elections held in April 1990 (Fink-Hafner – Lajh, 2003: 74).

It is interesting that in their electoral programmes and presentation all (important) competing parties in the parliamentary elections in 1992 and in 1996 stressed the need for integration or cooperation with the EU and approaching European standards, and the EU was used as a reference point in several policy fields in the parties’ electoral programmes. This means that the EU (and Europe and European standards) was mentioned in a very broad, undefined sense (Krašovec – Lajh – Kustec Lipicer, 2006).

In the Slovenian case the period of anticipatory Europeanization in the field of party politics was generally characterized by a broad consensus among the political élite and all the relevant (parliamentary) parties regarding Slovenia’s accession to the EU. With the exception of the Slovenian National Party⁷, no other parliamentary party has publicly opposed this aim. Moreover, as early as 1997, almost all the parliamentary parties (again with the exception of the Slovenian National Party) and the representatives of the Hungarian and Italian minorities, despite their other differences and conflicts, decided to sign an Agreement on Cooperation in the Accession Process with the EU. However, in this period public Euroscepticism slowly began to emerge to some extent. This was connected with negotiations on the European Agreement, especially when the issue of foreign ownership of real estate became a question in mid-1996 and 1997 (Fink Hafner – Lajh, 2003). Thus, some parties, especially the newly emerged New Party and the aforementioned Slovenian National Party, tried to take an advantage of the gap between the EU-supporting politics of practically all the parliamentary parties and growing negative public opinion when Slovenia’s accession to the EU was in question. Some minor efforts to mobilize electorate on this raised issue had already been made by both parties in 1996, but the question became more salient over the following years and especially in the parliamentary elections in 2000. However, these parties were not very successful because together they only attracted 5.0 percent of the total vote, (one party gained only 0.6 percent, while the other 4.4 percent). If we try

⁷ The Slovenian National Party won 3.2 percent of the votes in the 1996 parliamentary elections, 4.4 percent in those of 2000, 5.02 percent in the first elections to the European Parliament in 2004, and 6.3 percent in the 2004 parliamentary elections.

to find an explanation for their poor electoral result we can think about marginality of a question of EU accession to party, and particular to electoral competition (Krašovec – Lajh – Kustec Lipicer, 2006: 186).

When looking at the establishment and evolution of contact and cooperation between national parties and European party federations, we can identify only two parties in this period, Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and the United List of Social Democrats (now the Social Democrats), which have established contacts and cooperation with their European counterparts. In 1994 Liberal Democracy of Slovenia was granted associate member status in the European Liberal and Democrat and Reform Party, while in 1996 the United List of Social Democrats became an observer in the Party of European Socialists.

The period of adaptive Europeanization brought some further formal links between the Slovenian parties and their European counterparts. Liberal Democracy of Slovenia became a full member of the European Liberal and Democrat and Reform Party in 1998, while the United List of Social Democrats became an associate member of the Party of European Socialists in 1999 and a full member in 2003. The Social Democratic Party of Slovenia (now the Slovenian Democratic Party), the Slovenian People's Party and New Slovenia in 2001 became observers in the European People's Party grouping, while in 2003 they became associate members. In addition, the Youth Party of Slovenia in 2003 was granted observer status in the European Federation of Green Parties.

One of the clearest types of evidence of Europeanization, as a result of contacts and cooperation between Slovenian parties and their European counterparts, is the modification of party programmes (Ladrech, 2002: 369). Analysis of "standard" party programmes from this period revealed that the majority of the Slovenian parties that are members of their European counterparts had incorporated some of these parties' general orientations or values (Lajh – Krašovec, 2004). In this respect, the programmes of all the analysed parties had become slightly more Europeanized in the second period, in the sense of the increased mention of the EU in terms of European policy *per se*, and in references to other policy areas normally considered the remit of domestic policies (Ladrech, 2002: 396). Hence, in part we can think about increased mention of EU issues in the programmes of the investigated parties as the result of their cooperation with European party federations. But on the other hand, it is hard to avoid the feeling that the increased mention of EU matters was largely still a result of Slovenia joining the EU.

The next issue that can be raised is the potential organizational modifications made within parties. According to Ladrech (2002), affiliation with EU-level institutions (in this case particularly with European party federations) may generate some form of organizational changes. In the period of adaptive Europeanization before Slovenian full membership of the EU, none of the analysed parties had been subjected to any

significant changes in their internal organizational structure. In most cases any changes had been quite minor; if there had been any at all (Krašovec – Lajh, 2004). Nonetheless, in practically all the studied parties the increased role of secretaries for international cooperation had been shown, since they started to be on the basis of *ex-officio* criteria – permanently invited to all relevant party bodies meetings. This has, however, not been reflected in any of the parties by way of explicit statutory changes, only in practice.

Finally, adaptive Europeanization in the circumstances of full EU membership additionally strengthened formal links between Slovenian parties and their European counterparts, as beside Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and the United List of Social Democrats all other analysed Slovenian parties became full members of European party federations.

With regard to the programmes of the analysed parties the picture slightly differs from the findings in the period before full membership, but in general not substantially. In essence it is still impossible to show the parties' standpoints on specific EU policies. In this context, the parties still, as in the past, stressed the importance of the EU *per se* as well as using the EU in an instrumental way (they lean on the European standards in policies). However, in the cases of some parties it is obvious that the EU has been becoming more important since it has been more frequently mentioned in their programmes. Particular attention has been paid in the programme of Liberal Democracy of Slovenia to the EU financial perspective, different EU funds and further enlargement of the EU. Likewise, three other parties (the Slovenian Democratic Party, Slovenian People's Party and New Slovenia) have expressed support for further enlargement of the EU, while the Social Democrats have mentioned the need to diminishing of the democratic deficit in the EU. The Slovenian People's Party in particular has stressed the continuing need for the implementation of the idea of subsidiarity.

After full EU membership was gained some modifications could also been seen in the party statutes. These modifications above all formally defined the relations between the party and its deputies in the European Parliament, which is their (formal) inclusion in relevant party bodies in accordance with their function (*ex-officio* inclusion). We have noted formal arrangements in the Slovenian Democratic Party, Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, New Slovenia, the Youth Party of Slovenia and the Democratic Party of Retired People of Slovenia⁸. An important change to the internal organization of the Social Democrats occurred when its party leader was elected as a Member of the European Parliament, which led (in)directly to the establishment of a new party position. This took the form of a permanent deputy position – the vice-president of the party is appointed as permanent deputy to the party's president (nominated by the president of the party). Mr. Jelko Kacin, a Slovenian MEP and a member of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, was in mid-October 2005 elected on the post of the president

⁸ The party had for European Parliament elections in 2004 proposed a joint candidate list with the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and the list received two MEPs.

of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, but the party has not followed the path that the Social Democrats have taken (Krašovec – Lajh – Kustec, Lipicer 2006: 186).

Finally, we would like to mention two more important decisions that were taken in the period of full EU membership. The first one is related to the adoption of the single European currency in 2007. This is a point where one could expect some division or polarization between parties or the impact of the EU on parties and the party system. However, once again the Slovenian political parties surprised commentators, since all strongly supported the idea and they also supported the economic measures that had to be taken to make this possible. The ratification of the EU Constitutional Treaty could be another way of observing the attitude of Slovenian parties towards the EU issue. It should be noted that the Slovenian government decided (this was decided already by the government of Anton Rop – the 2002–04 period – although it was implemented by the current government of Janez Janša) that a referendum on ratification would not be held. Even more, Slovenia very quickly ratified the EU Constitutional Treaty without a referendum, at the beginning of 2005. There were some objections from the Slovenian National Party to this decision but in parliament ratification came about without any problem (only some MPs from the Slovenian National Party voted against ratification).

Bosnia-Herzegovina – between democratization and Europeanization of party politics ... or not?!

As we already mentioned, of all the former Yugoslav republics the mixed ethnic structure and direct involvement in the Civil War were the main influences on political life in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Due to the war, the period from 1990 to 1996 was even marked by the absence of any kind of elections. Following the mediation of the international community, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina ended in 1995. At the same time, as part of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia-Herzegovina “received” its own constitution (as Annex IV of the Dayton Agreement), which in the short-term enabled the revival of political life, but in the long-term locked Bosnia-Herzegovina in a stalemate, not only in political and socio-economic terms, but especially with regard to ethnic division.

On the basis of the Dayton Constitution the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and *Republika Srpska*⁹. Citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina therefore have citizenship of Bosnia-Herzegovina and citizenship of either of respective entities. Among all six former Yugoslav republics Bosnia-Herzegovina as the only one has a collective organ of the chief of the state – a presidency consists of three members based on ethnic structure (one Bosnian, one

⁹ In the article, we use term *Republika Srpska* (Republic of Serbia in Bosnia-Herzegovina) as is stated also in Annex IV. (i.e. the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina) in the English version of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Croatian and one Serbian member). All three members of the presidency are elected directly: the Bosnian and Croatian member in the territory of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the Serbian member is elected in *Republika Srpska*. The parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina is bicameral, consisting of the directly elected House of Representatives (*Zastupnički dom*)¹⁰ and an indirectly elected House of Peoples (*Dom naroda*).¹¹ Both entities have also their own, directly elected parliaments (House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the National Assembly of the *Republika Srpska*).

This short description of the political and institutional arrangements of Bosnia-Herzegovina shows us the dominance of ethnic equality, which in fact means ethnic division. The split of the country into two entities, which to some extent is a “state-in-a-state”, strongly influences party politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If we take into consideration Panebianco’s thesis on the degree of adaptation to the environment we can see that such a state/institutional arrangement makes strong demands on political parties, because they have to “adapt” to this environment by mobilizing their electorate (each in particular entity) according to ethnic affiliation. In this sense the prevalence of ethnic over other cleavages in the party arena of Bosnia-Herzegovina is no surprise, as well as the fact that practically all its parties are characterized as “ethnic” or even “nationalistic”¹². As long as the parties tend to adapt to the ethnically demanding environment it is hard to expect that their Europeanization or adaptation to European integration processes will prevail, either as a result of their cooperation with their European counterparts, either simply in the sense of accession of the Bosnia-Herzegovina to the EU.

In the theoretical part of the article we already mentioned that during the processes of democratization and modernization post-socialist states were frequently under the supervision of various international organizations as “institutional mentors”. This has been especially evident in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina. As the EU proved to be completely ineffective during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the mediation of the wider international community, especially the United States of America, was needed. This situation resulted in Bosnia-Herzegovina having a “forced” Constitution from the outside, and at the same time long-term not only an institutional mentor, but also an external mediator in the form of the High Representative of the

¹⁰ Two-thirds members of the House of Representatives are elected in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while one-third of members are elected in *Republika Srpska*.

¹¹ Members of the House of Nations are delegated by the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the National Assembly of *Republika Srpska*.

¹² Some authors (for example, Pejanović 2006) argue that political parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be classified as ethnic-based or state-based. In such a case, the ethnic-based parties are above all defined as the Bosniaks Party of Democratic Action, Croas Croatian Democratic Community, and Serbian Democratic Party. However, taking into consideration election results as well as conducted interviews with high officials of all relevant political parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina, our presumption is the strong prevalence of ethnically based political parties.

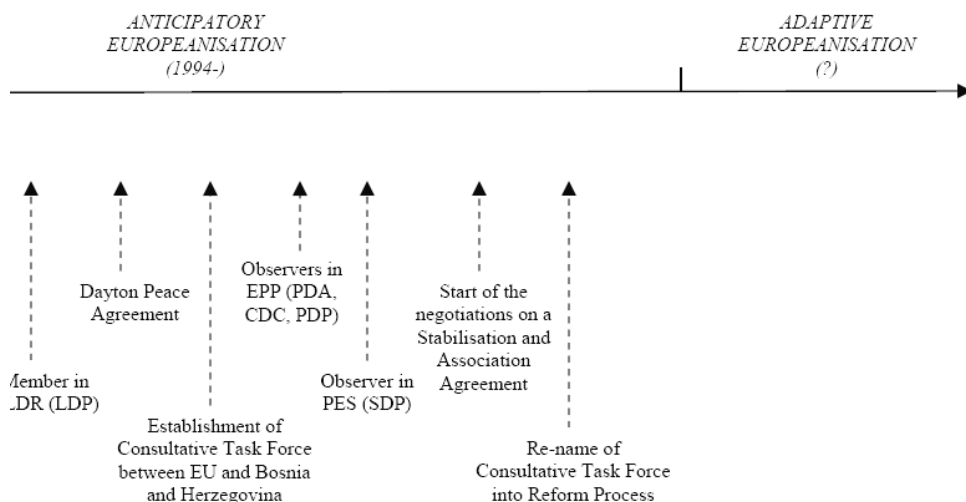
International Community¹³, who became responsible for overseeing the implementation of civilian aspects of the accord ending the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Pejanović, 2006: 56–7). As such, the High Representative was given responsibilities that enabled him to adopt decisions with legislative force, as well as to replace officials if they did not act in line with the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Since 1996 the High Representative of the International Community adopted more than 100 decisions about which there was no consensus in the political structures of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while on the other hand he has also changed the President of the *Republika Srpska*, three members of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and more local officials (ibid.). Although the High Representative of the International Community works towards the transition of Bosnia-Herzegovina it is important to emphasize that his decisions (as well as his presence *per se*) have caused scepticism and to some extent also political apathy among the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has been evident also in ever decreasing voter turnout (Fink Hafner – Lajh – Krašovec, 2005: 103). In the eyes of the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina the changes of various officials have been problematic in particular, especially for two reasons: firstly, these officials were legitimately elected, and secondly, the High Representative has lacked legitimacy for such a strong involvement. This statement was in fact confirmed also by all interviewees, regardless of which party they belonged to.

Nevertheless, as EU integration is one of the main political objectives of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the first signs of Europeanization processes, more or less independent from the International and EU structures, are already visible¹⁴. They include formal links between some political parties from Bosnia-Herzegovina and European party federations. Three parties – the Party of Democratic Action, the Croatian Democratic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina¹⁵, and the Party of Democratic Progress of Republika Srpska – obtained the status of observers in the European People's Party in 2004. Similarly, the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina has observer status in the Party of European Socialists, whereas the Liberal Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina had even become a full member of the European Liberal and Democrat and Reform Party as early as 1994.

¹³ The High Representative of the International Community is at the same time the EU Special Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The aim is that the EU Special Representative will be retained well after the abolition of the post of High Representative of International Community (available at: <http://www.ohr.int/>).

¹⁴ As no contractual instrument between the EU and Bosnia-Herzegovina has been present so far, in 1998 a Consultative Task Force was established, primarily with the aim of institutionalized political dialogue and expert advice. In January 2006, as a result of the start of the negotiations of a Stabilization and Associations Agreement, the Consultative Task Force was re-named the Reform Process Monitoring (European Commission 2007).

¹⁵ On January 2006, the EPP placed the Presidency of HDZBiH under a „political embargo“.

Figure 5: Party politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and European integration**Legend:**

CDC – Croatian Democratic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

ELDR – European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party

EPP – European People's Party

LDP – Liberal Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina

PDA – Party of Democratic Action

PDP – Party of Democratic Progress of Republika Srpska

PES – Party of European Socialists

SDP – Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Further Europeanization processes of party politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina are by and large dependent on the subsequent development of relations between the EU and Bosnia-Herzegovina¹⁶. Today, Bosnia-Herzegovina has the status of a potential candidate state for EU accession¹⁷. The first next crucial step towards the status of a candidate state is signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement. The negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement started in November 2005. Technical talks have been completed, but signing the Agreement is contingent upon

¹⁶ The development of relations between EU and Bosnia-Herzegovina can also be examined from the point of view of the EU financial assistance. Between 1991 and 2000 the EU financial support to Bosnia-Herzegovina mostly focused on refugee programmes and reconstruction, while in the period after 2000 it shifted from postwar assistance to institutional capacity-building and economic development. In this period, key target areas have been public administration reform (including customs and taxation), issues, connected to justice and home affairs (including police reform, integrated border management, and judicial reform), and improvement of the investment climate (including trade, education, environment and infrastructure) (European Commission 2007).

¹⁷ Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, including Kosovo, have the same status.

sufficient progress in addressing key priorities: police reform,¹⁸ cooperation with the International Court of Justice, public broadcasting, and public administration reform¹⁹ (European Commission, 2007).

Closely connected with public administration reform is also the necessary change of the Dayton Constitution – the internal adoption of Bosnia's "own" Constitution, without the mediation of the international community²⁰. To achieve this aim, according to the opinions of the interviewees, abolishment of ethnic cleavages is necessary, as members of parliament continue to vote along ethnic lines and in this way block the adoption of some important decisions. Similar conclusions are outlined in the Bosnia-Herzegovina 2006 Progress Report (2006: 7), which states that political parties and delegates have continued to delay and block the adoption of specific laws necessary for progress in the Stabilization and Association Process. For example, the state parliament was negatively affected by the Serb representatives' decision to boycott its sessions in May 2006. The boycott, which lasted one month, was a protest against delays in establishing a "Truth Commission on the Sufferings of Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, Jews and Others" in Sarajevo during the Civil War. In addition, deputies also remain highly influenced by pressure groups pursuing their individual interests.

¹⁸ Police reform is one of the most problematic issues in the modernization processes of Bosnia-Herzegovina and consequently its accession to the EU. According to the Bosnia-Herzegovina 2006 Progress Report (2006), only little progress has been made in this area, as the requirements set out in the Agreement on Police Restructuring of October 2005 have not yet been fulfilled. While the Police Restructuring Directorate has been established, the work of this organization has been undermined by the obstructive attitude of the Republika Srpska representatives. This has led to delays in the implementation of the Agreement.

¹⁹ In contrast to police reform, more visible progress in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been made in the field of public administration. Other post-socialist countries have been faced with regular reports of the EU about the reforms in the field of public administration. As Krašovec – Kovačič (2007: 139) pointed out, in other post-socialist countries these actions clearly had the effect of speeding up the reform processes. In addition, in Bosnia-Herzegovina The National Strategy for the Reform of the Public Administration was finally adopted, and support staff for the Public Administration Reform Coordination Office have been appointed. In addition, coordination between the State and Entity level Civil Service Agencies has improved. However, further efforts in the field of public administration are vital, especially in order to build a transparent, efficient and independent public administration, able to respond better to the needs of its citizens and the requirements of EU integration (for more information about public administration reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina see the Bosnia-Herzegovina 2006 Progress Report (2006: 9–10). According to the role of the EU in other post-socialist countries we can expect its similar effect in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the field of public administration. Despite the impact of the EU on reform processes in public administration in other post-socialist countries, it has to be stressed that reform of this field had never been presented as a formal criteria for full membership in the EU (Krašovec – Kovačič, 2007). It is the same in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which clearly distinguish public administration reform from police or custom reforms in this country – these two reforms are formally set criteria defined especially for Bosnia-Herzegovina in establishing the process of cooperation between it and the EU.

²⁰ So far, efforts to gradually reform the constitutional framework in Bosnia-Herzegovina have failed. The Parliament rejected a reform package agreed by political party leaders in April 2006. Among other, the package included enhanced state-level competencies, improved and simplified decision-making procedures and representation of minorities in the state Parliament. Bosnia-Herzegovina thus missed the opportunity to take a first and important step towards a more democratic and efficient state (Bosnia-Herzegovina 2006 Progress Report 2006: 7).

All in all, the conclusion of the negotiations of the Stabilization and Association Agreement as the next important evolutionary step in relations between the EU and Bosnia-Herzegovina is dependent on Bosnia-Herzegovina's progress in implementing key reforms, which demands broader consensus among political élite and – consequently – the abolishment of ethnic cleavages. In the meantime, Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to benefit from financial assistance granted by the EU.

Tentative conclusions

Our analysis showed a great divergence of two former Yugoslav republics – Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina – concerning the processes of Europeanization of party politics. While Slovenia has already gone through five steps of Europeanization processes (presented in Figures 2 and 3), Bosnia-Herzegovina is still stuck at the first step. In general, Europeanization processes in Slovenia were predominantly dealt with in the second half of the 1990s. Similar example is evident also from the viewpoint of party politics. There is some evidence that for national party politics the EU arena is more and more becoming an additional arena to exert an influence on domestic policy issues and actors. During the last years before full EU membership, Slovenian political parties steadily devoted more and more attention to various EU issues in their programmes (in this period mainly still in principle), while in the organizational aspect, explicit statutory changes in parties were not evident, although some minor changes in practice have already occurred. The first minor statutory changes thus emerged only in the full membership period. Furthermore, in this period some parties' programmes also showed that the EU is becoming more important as well as more frequently and specifically mentioned. However, by and large, Europeanization processes still only have minor influences on Slovenian political parties as a result of Slovenia's full membership in the EU and on party cooperation with European party federations.

On the other hand, in fact, at the very first stage, Bosnia-Herzegovina followed the Slovenian pattern of Europeanization of party politics, which includes establishing incremental formal links between national political parties and European party federations. However, there is still an enormous difference between Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina when observing processes of Europeanization. Due to various socio-economic determinants, the high level of direct involvement in the Civil War and an exceedingly mixed ethnic structure, Bosnia-Herzegovina has faced delays in its democratic transition. As a result, during recent years it has rather sought the democratization of social and political life rather than confronting the challenges of accession to the European integration processes. It has had a long-term institutional mentor in the form of the High Representative of the International Community, while political parties have been operating in circumstances of strong ethnic cleavages. Hence, further Europeanization processes demand a democratically consolidated party arena, which

would establish an environment that for political parties would not lead to pressure to adapt themselves in order to mobilize their voters along ethnic lines. In addition, more explicit and direct EU influences on party politics will probably be visible only after more intensive institutional relations between the EU and Bosnia-Herzegovina, primarily including the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, which will enable the start of official negotiations. However, the mixed ethnic structure of Bosnia-Herzegovina will continue to an extent in the future and will probably influence peculiar Europeanization processes *vis-à-vis* the current Central and Eastern European pattern. We can agree with Fink-Hafner – Krašovec (2006: 17) that the EU and Europeanization processes have not had the same prominence in all the countries that have become EU members or are still in the process of establishing cooperation with the EU. Bosnia-Herzegovina has been, for several reasons mentioned above, so far in fact one of the most clear examples of a country which experienced very limited impact of the EU seen in the absence of its pressures toward limiting the strength of extremism, forcing larger parties to moderate their behaviour and helping pro-reformist, liberal parties/forces (Fink-Hafner – Krašovec, 2006: 18). However, we should not overlook the fact that the first period after the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was (due to the weak role of the EU) marked with the processes of internationalization and not Europeanization. Such internationalization represented even greater adaptation pressures than the processes of Europeanization, and the result was visible especially in the (“forced”) adoption of the Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, when the role of the international community will be to a larger extent replaced by the EU, we could, based on the data presented above, probably expect that Bosnia-Herzegovina in the future will present one of the most clear examples of the EU two-level model developed by Fink-Hafner – Krašovec (2006).

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